Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE:	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Alexandria (C	i ty)
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AND/OR HISTORIC:						

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☐ Object	☐ Both	☐ Being Con	sidered	Preservation work	□ No	C 7 C G
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Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Virginia COUNTY. Alexandria (City)
FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER DATE

STATE

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM (Type all entries - complete applicable sections) 0/15/6 1. NAME COMMON GADSBY'S TAVERN AND/OR HISTORIC: 2. LOCATION STREET AND NUMBER: 128 North Royal Street Alexandria CODE COUNTY: CODE Virginia 22314 51 Alexandria (City) 510 3. CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY **ACCESSIBLE** S OWNERSHIP STATUS (Check One) TO THE PUBLIC Z District 🙀 Building Public Public Acquisition: Ccupied 0 Site 🙀 Private Restricted ☐ In Process Structure Unoccupied Unrestricted Both Being Considered Object preservation wor ☐ No in progress PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park Transportation Comments 2 Commercial Industrial Private Residence Other (Specify) ☐ Educational Military Religious Entertainment X Museum Scientific 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY WNER'S NAME: Virginia American Legion, Post 24 ш STREET AND NUMBER: ш 128 North Royal Street CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE Alexandria Virginia 22314 510 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Alexandria City Hall STREET AND NUMBER: CITY OR TOWN: STATE CODE Alexandria Virginia 22301 510 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS TITLE OF SURVEY: ENTRY NUMBER HABS.... DATE OF SURVEYS 1936
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: FOR NPS USE Federal [State County Local Library of Congress STREET AND NUMBER: ON L CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE DATE Washington 11

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(July	1969)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Virginia	
COUNTY	
Alexandria (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Y
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(Continuation Sheet)

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Item 7 cont'd

Gadsby's Tavern is an outstanding illustration of the central role played by many taverns in early American life.

b. BOUNDARIES:

Gadsby's Tavern is situated on a lot approximately 115 feet in depth and 100 feet in width; it is located on the southwest corner of North Royal and Cameron Streets, Alexandria.

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a. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Gadsby's Tavern, which comprises two adjoining tavern buildings, is one of America's most famous taverns. The smaller of the two buildings was built in 1752 and known as the City Tavern, and sometimes as the Coffee House. During the last half of the 18th century, it was an important center in Virginia life. Washington recruited his first command of Provincial troops for the Great Meadows campaign in 1754 at City Tavern. He was quartered here when he received his commission as Major on General Braddock's staff. The Fairfax Resolves were prepared here — those resolves that eventually grew into the Virginia Bill of Rights. In this tavern met the convention called by Washington to settle the question of import duties on the Potomac River commerce. The question seemed of larger importance and in time led to the convention in Philadelphia which prepared the Constitution of the United States. The first celebration of the adoption of the Federal Constitution subsequently took place here on June 28, 1788.

John Wise built a large three-story brick addition in 1792. It was opened on February 11, with festivities commemorating Washington's birthday. In Wise's new hotel, Alexandria architecture reached its highest expression, and it was the ultimate in comfort and elegance for its days.

In 1794, John Gadsby took over the tavern under a lease. As fine as the tavern had been under Wise, it was to reach new excellence and fame. Running the two taverns as one, under the name Gadsby's Tavern, he spread the fame of its comfort and culinary art throughout the country. From Boston to New Orleans, the traveler did his best to make Gadsby's. Gadsby established his own state line from Alexandria to Philadelphia, and it was necessary to be a guest with him in order to get a ticket.

Such men as George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, George Clinton Benjamin Franklin, General Braddock, the Byrds, Fitzhughs, Lees and Washingtons are among those who visited Gadsby's. Indeed the two taverns housed and fed most of the famous persons visiting the country from 1752 for the next one hundred years.

The two buildings that make up the Tavern were purchased by the American Legion, Post #24 in 1926. Since then, patriotic organizations of Alexandria have joined in its restoration. The ballroom woodwork of the larger City Hotel, which was taken for the American Wing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been copied in detail and replaced. The front of this building was restored by the Mount Vernon Chapter of the D.A.R., and the main doorway was purchased from the Metropolitan Museum and restored in 1949. Two ballrooms, a walled courtyard with cobblestone surfacing, an underground brick kitchen, a tap room and lodging rooms furnished in the manner of Colonial Virginia give an excellent picture of tavern hospitality as it was enjoyed at this famous inn.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES